

Word Choice

Any activity that allows students to practice...

Building vocabulary through reading anything and everything

Brainstorming: how else could you say it?

Learning to use resources – traditional and computer software

Putting “tired” words to rest

Playing with language, dialects, formal and informal word usage

Building power in verbs

Practicing precision – more for less

1. Forbidden Words

Together with students, brainstorm a list of “forbidden” words. Resolve not to use these words in writing or speaking. You may wish to write an obituary, let the words and actually “bury” them in a shoe box or with some other ceremony, banish them from your literary lives. Establish a review committee of students who could grant a special exemption to a student who needs to use one of the forbidden words with a clearly written or presented justification.

2. Postcards

Build descriptive powers by brainstorming words to describe postcard places or people – then write the postcard text that makes use of those words. See if students can match the resulting descriptions with the right cards. By the way, postcards are available at bookstores in sets on the same subjects, places, or activities. When the postcards all have the same basic theme, the students have to write more carefully in order to describe the different pictures.